

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

March 24, 2010, 4:30p.m.

Cal Brand Meeting Hall

PRESENT

Trena Carter
Ian Kohen
Greg Lewis
Gil Palmer
Rosalind Pegram
Shiva Rallapalli
John Roberts
John Stroh

ABSENT

Akua B. Agyei
Tony McClendon

Meeting Called to Order

STAFF PRESENT:

Deputy Director Lorraine Smith and Secretary Lula Young.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Commissioner Roberts called roll and requested any corrections or amendments to the February 2010 minutes.

Commissioner Kohen moved to accept the February 2010 minutes as submitted. Commissioner Rallapalli seconded. Motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Deputy Director Smith reported the Donations Account balance as \$6,844.80 as there were no transactions during the last month.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Commissioner Palmer shared an article from the Chicago Tribune ranking Columbus, IN as sixth in the nation for architectural innovation and design by the American Institute of Architects. He also advised that Columbus is one of the top three cities of its size for economic development and growth and that he attributed part of that success to the Commissioners and the Columbus Area Economic Growth Council.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Deputy Director Smith provided the Director's report. She informed Commissioners that former commissioner Merlyn Bartlett was scheduled to mediate a sexual orientation complaint on April 8, 2010. Commissioner Palmer voiced a tentative interest in observing the mediation.

Deputy Director Smith advised that Director Tinsley was continuing in her dual-role as Commission Director and Human Resources Consultant and that the Mayor recognized and complimented the Director on her work.

Additional activities reported by the Deputy Director included the completion of the new commissioner interviews conducted by city council liaison, Priscilla Scalf. She also informed Commissioners of the Audit and Review sub-committee meeting scheduled for April 8, 2010 that

was scheduled with committee members, Ric King, Dan Mitchell and Arlette Cooper Tinsley who is facilitating the process.

OPEN FORUM:

“Welcoming Community Colleges Initiative: Supporting Educational and Labor Market Success for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students”

Commissioner John Roberts reported on his participation in the Welcoming Community Colleges Initiative conference held in Washington D.C. and co-sponsored by the Academy of Educational Development, the National Council on Student Development and the Human Rights Campaign.

He provided a copy of the concept paper to Commissioners and staff which outlined the goals of the initiative and shared statistical information about the level of harassment and hate crimes that were committed against LGBT students on residential and non-residential campuses. Commissioner Roberts went on to advise that the basic issue is to protect the human rights and provide a support system for LGBT students. Discussion ensued.

Southside Elementary Presentation

Commissioner Roberts reported on his third annual speaking engagement with Becky Williams' sixth grade class. He advised that this year, the student audience expanded to include all of the sixth grade students at Southside. In wrapping up his presentation he challenged students to think of who they were inspiring.

Commissioner Roberts announced that a student art exhibit of toothpick constructions, was on display in the upper gallery of the Columbus Learning Center. He also advised that he would be presenting the “Lifting Up A Voice” video to a class at First United Methodist Church on Sunday, April 11th.

ACTION ITEM – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION:

The slate of officers was presented by Commissioner Roberts as created by the nominating sub-committee. The slate was presented as follows:

Chairperson: Commissioner Palmer, **Vice Chairperson:** Commissioner Greg Lewis,
Secretary: Commissioner John Roberts, **Treasurer:** Commissioner Trena Carter

Chairperson Palmer opened the floor for additional nominations, there were none. Commissioner Pegram requested clarification of previous comments and considerations of member succession, discussion ensued.

Commissioner Stroh moved that nominations be closed, Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Per the Commission's Rules and Regulations, Commissioners voted by written ballot for each office individually.

The slate of officers was approved by a majority vote for each position.

ACTION ITEM – LAWS AWARD SELECTION:

On behalf of the Laws Award nomination selection committee consisting of Commissioners McClendon, Kohen and Roberts, Commissioner Kohen announced that the Heritage Fund - The Community Foundation of Bartholomew County, as their recommendation to be the recipient of the 2010 Laws Award. Commissioner Roberts confirmed their selection advising that the Committee had carefully reviewed the criteria and that the Heritage Fund met all criteria.

Commissioner Lewis moved to accept the committee's recommendation to award the 2010 William R. Laws Award to The Heritage Fund. Commissioner Stroh seconded. Discussion ensued. Motion carried unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS –CAMEO UPDATE:

Deputy Director Smith reported that the CAMEO meetings were continuing to have good attendance, even drawing a representative of Vectren from Evansville. She went on to advise that CAMEO is going to reinvigorate the Micky King award and in support of that, Ann and Ron King were present at the last meeting to speak about Micky King's work in creating the Human Rights Commission.

Deputy Director Smith announced that CAMEO's first annual meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, May 26th at 5:30pm with keynote speaker Tim Solso. She stated that the event location will be the Columbus Learning Center auditorium. Commissioners discussed their desire to attend the event and planned to attend the annual meeting after completing the full commission meeting. Discussion ensued.

The Deputy Director continued her report advising that the most recent Journey in Film showing of "Whale Rider" had a good attendance at Yes Cinema.

The Deputy Director ended her report by informing Commissioners of a Heritage Fund online survey to gather community feedback.

LIAISON UPDATE – INTERFAITH FORUM of COLUMBUS (IFFC):

Commissioner Lewis advised that he had facilitated the March meeting and that the IFFC is marking the 10th Anniversary of their founding. He advised that IFFC is still seeking to expand the diversity of their membership and have again extended an invitation to CAMEO members to participate in or join the Forum.

LIAISON UPDATES – PRIDE ALLIANCE COLUMBUS :

Commissioner Kohen announced an increased interest in the start-up of a GS/A club at East high school and that he would obtain more details to share with Commissioners. He went on to report that Sondra Bolte had recently been interviewed during the 'Blooming Out' radio program.

Commissioner Kohen the activities of PAC included providing bright colored stickers provided by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to attach to the census form promoting the inclusion of the LGBT community in the census count. He went on to share the appreciation and thanks voiced by the Alliance for the Director's presentation to their group the previous month.

LIAISON UPDATES – INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY COALITION (ICC):

Commissioner Stroh announced the upcoming lecture, Same Sex Marriage: Past, Present & Future by Christopher Clark, Senior Staff Attorney for Lambda Legal, Midwest Regional Office., co-sponsored by the ICC and CHRC.

LIAISON UPDATE – IMMIGRATION ISSUES GROUP (IIG):

Commissioner Pegram reported that the group was pleased that the Census bureau had provided literature in Spanish to their group.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Carter moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Stroh seconded. Meeting adjourned.